

REMARKS

Claims 1-16, 19-23, and 25-28 are pending. Claims 17-18, 24, and 29-30 were previously cancelled. Claims 31-34 are herein cancelled.

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication in the Office Action that claims 6-16 and 19-22 are allowed over the prior art of record.

Applicants further note with appreciation the examiner's indication that claims 31-34 are directed to allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten into independent form.

Accordingly, rather than rewriting claims 31-34, the features of these claims have been incorporated into their respective parent claims. That is, the recitations of claim 31 are now included into claim 1, claim 32 into claim 23, claim 33 into claim 25, and claim 34 into claim 27. Claims 31-34 have been canceled.

As amended, it is respectfully submitted that all claims now stand in condition for allowance.

With regard to the Examiner's statement for reasons for allowance, the Examiner has noted that the prior art of record does not teach or fairly suggest that "a more secure security configuration proposal is offered before a less secure security configuration proposal", as now recited in the independent claims.

It is herein brought to the Examiner's attention that in a corresponding United Kingdom application, (Serial No. 0327185.5) the British Examiner considered the same art as the U.S. Examiner. However, in making his rejections, the British Examiner relied on the references to Harkins et al., Maughan et al, and Dukes et al., all noted on the U.S. Form 1449.

Of interest, the UK Examiner indicated that page 15 of the D. Maughan et al. reference ("Internet Security Association and Key Management Protocol (ISAKMP", retrieved from the Internet, November 1998)" defines a "proposal" as "a list, in decreasing order of preference, of the protection suites that a system considers acceptable to protect traffic under a given situation".

We believe this to be distinguishable from the claimed "a more secure security configuration proposal is offered before a less secure security configuration proposal" since "preference" does not necessarily indicate "more to less secure" but a particular protection suite may be preferred for any number of reasons including, complexity, overhead, etc. in a given traffic situation.

The Examiner is requested to consider the above remarks in view of the newly discovered teachings found in Maughan.

In view of the foregoing, it requested that the application be reconsidered, that claims 1-16, 19-23, and 25-28 be allowed and that the application be passed to issue. Please charge any shortages and credit any overcharges to our Deposit Account number 02-2666.

Should the examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic interview.

Respectfully submitted,

/Kevin A. Reif/

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